FOUNDATIONS
to the
Indiana Academic Standards
for
Young Children
from Birth to Age 5

Indiana Department of Education
and
Family and Social Services Administration,
Division of Family Resources,
Bureau of Child Care

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INTRODUCTION

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**Children come into this world eager to learn.
The first five years of life
are a time of enormous growth of linguistic,
conceptual, social, emotional,
and motor competence.**

(*Eager to Learn,* 2000, p. 1)

What do we know about young learners, ages birth to 5 years old?

Young learners create understanding and knowledge actively, combining new concepts and ideas into what they already know. Research on brain development and how young children learn has demonstrated the phenomenal pace at which learning takes place from the moment of birth.

Adults have an opportunity and an obligation to assist children in becoming active participants in the learning process throughout their lives. To grow and learn, young children need early childhood settings that support the development of the full range of capacities that will serve as a foundation for future school learning.

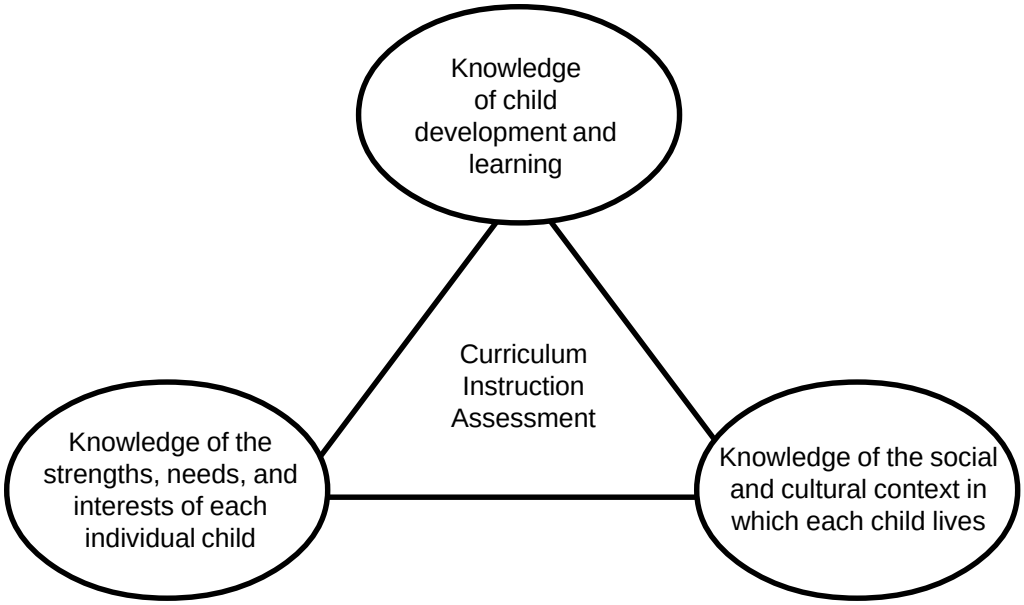
It is vitally important that all children have learning experiences that are:

- Built on positive relationships with caring adults.
- Appropriate and based upon current knowledge and research of child development and learning.
- Focused on the strengths, needs, and interests of each individual child.
- Respect the social and cultural context in which each child lives.

Only after addressing these four essential areas of information and knowledge can individuals working with young children make decisions concerning appropriate learning experiences.

What is developmentally appropriate learning for young children?

Developmentally appropriate practice *can be defined as a product of the adult making decisions based on at least three important kinds of knowledge and information:*



Reference: Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs.* Washington, DC: NAEYC.

The concept of developmentally appropriate has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Age appropriateness refers to the universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by any program/home provides a framework from which the adult can prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences. Each child must be viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing for growth. Learning for young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. This child development knowledge should be used to identify the range of appropriate behaviors, activities, and materials for a specific age group and used in conjunction with understanding about individual children's growth patterns, strengths, interests, and experiences to design the most appropriate learning environment. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate experiences. For the content and the teaching strategies to be developmentally appropriate, they must be age appropriate and individually appropriate.

What does research say about appropriate learning environments for young children?

Early childhood experts, along with the National Research Council's Report and Review Committee, have provided an independent review of quality experiences for young learners. The summary of findings from this study was published in a book entitled, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers* (2002).

From the Executive Summary of this study, some characteristics of quality experiences for young learners are listed below:

- Responsive interpersonal relationships with adults nurture young children's dispositions (desire) to learn and their emerging abilities.

- When curriculum aims are specified and integrated across domains, children tend to learn more and are better prepared to master the complex demands of future formal schooling.

- Young children who are living in circumstances that place them at greater risk of school failure—including poverty, low level of maternal education, maternal depression, and other factors that can limit their access to opportunities and resources—are much more likely to succeed in school if they have access to well-planned, high-quality early childhood experiences.

- Cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development are complementary, mutually supportive areas of growth and require active attention.

The Birth to Three and Three to Five Leadership Committees support the notion that it is the **whole** child that must be developed. Early childhood experiences should focus on all *domains* or aspects of development:

- ***Social/Emotional:*** children's feelings about themselves, the development of responsibility, and their ability to relate positively to others.

- ***Cognitive:*** children's thinking skills, including the development of symbolic and problem-solving skills.

- ***Physical Development:*** children's gross (large muscle) and fine (small muscle) motor development.

- ***Self-help:*** children's capacity to take care of personal needs and acquiring independence in age-appropriate eating, toileting, dressing, and hygiene tasks.

- ***Communication and Literacy:*** children's ability to communicate through words, both spoken and written. (Source: Trister Dodge, et al., (2000). *Connecting Content, Teaching, and Learning*. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies.).

Effective, quality programs for young children:

→ Acknowledge and encourage each child's efforts.
→ Model and demonstrate.
→ Create challenges and support children in extending their capabilities.
→ Provide specific directions and instruction.
→ Organize the environment in ways to pursue educational goals for all children.

All of these strategies need to be used in the context of play and adult-directed activities in which children are actively engaged and responsive. Recognition must also be given to the fact that children learn from each other and from interactions with the physical environment.

Why have these foundations been written?

From kindergarten through twelfth grade, academic standards have been established to promote excellence and equity in education. Excellence is important in education today for future success. Academic standards represent the *essential content* every student needs in order to have a basis for understanding a subject area. Indiana's foundations to the academic standards include skills and experiences for children's development. The foundations to the standards address skills and competencies that children are to achieve from birth to age five. The foundations are not a comprehensive list of skills that a particular child must exhibit. They are a guide to assist young learners with knowledge and skills in the early years that will prepare them for success in school.

The Indiana academic standards and the foundations are frameworks instead of complete curricula. A curriculum is generally much richer with broader and deeper understandings than those in the standards or foundations. An early childhood curriculum is based on a philosophy of how children learn. It contains both content about what children should learn and methods about how to teach content. A framework helps provide knowledge and skills that children are to achieve at various ages, helps identify any gaps or points not being presented as essentials in the curriculum, and assists in planning experiences that will promote children's progress toward achieving the skills.

These foundations have been developed by individuals with expertise in each specialized area and have been based on the latest national research and findings for each content area. By outlining specific skills and concepts and giving examples of instructional strategies, these foundations to the standards will support teachers, parents, caregivers and other professional personnel as they develop appropriate experiences for young children. At the heart of the effort to promote quality early childhood experiences for all, foundations to the standards have been developed to support adults that work with children from birth to age five.

In developing the foundations to the standards, the collaborators took as their primary position the concept that a program designed for young children will be most effective when based on what is known **about** young children. These foundations are designed to assist all who work with young children in approaching the various domains from a developmentally appropriate perspective.

The skills and activities "lay the foundation" for accomplishment of the Indiana Academic Standards.

How to Use the Foundations for Young Children

The Indiana *Foundations for Young Children* address all the content areas: English/language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, physical education, health, and the arts. Each content section begins with an introduction, the key findings that support the Birth to Three and the Three to Five foundations. These foundations build upon one another and are aligned with the Indiana Academic Standards for kindergarten in a developmentally appropriate way. The foundations reflect the types of experiences and interactions early learners need to develop the foundation.

The term **young children** refers to any child, birth to age five, regardless of whether the child is in an early childhood setting or at home. The term **adult** refers to any adult who has interactions with the child whether the person is a teacher, caregiver, friend, family member, or other professional. The term **environment** refers to anywhere young children might be.

Each individual foundation is divided into sections.

- **YOUNG CHILDREN ARE LEARNING WHEN THEY:**

  This section gives a description of skills that support development of the foundation. The skills or accomplishments are not written in particular order, either in importance or development. The skills in the Birth to Three Foundations are identified numerically as basic skills (e.g., B1 - Emerging Skills, B2 - Writing) in contrast to the skills in the Three to Five Foundations (e.g., F1 - Reading: Word Recognition, Fluency and Vocabulary Development, F2 - Reading: Reading Comprehension). Development of skills in one area is often related to and influences development in other areas. As such, skills may be repeated across foundations.

- **A CHILD CAN BE SUPPORTED BY AN ADULT WHO:**

  This next section gives examples of many activities adults can do with children to support growth and learning in each area. Statements of the adult's role as a facilitator/teacher of learning for young children are included. Many of these contain suggestions for materials to include in the environment.

- **HOW IT LOOKS IN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES:**

  A variety of scenarios are given as examples of experiences children and adults may be doing that would address each foundation. Some scenarios are written in the classroom environment, some in the home environment, and some are outdoors. All activities planned by the child and the adult should reflect the needs and interests of the young learners involved. Along side each scenario is a list of related developmental skills from other domains children are working on while addressing the identified skill in the foundation.

The foundations and experiences are NOT inclusive but rather a guide that will assist the young learner in preparing for success. These skills are not written in any particular order and, because children grow and learn at different rates and in different ways, should NOT be used as a checklist.

Social-Emotional Development

How Do Positive Early Relationships Affect a Child's Development?

The importance of healthy emotional development in the first 5 years cannot be overstated. Simply put, emotional development provides the backbone for all other areas of development. Emotional well-being is often thought of as having two interrelated components: the attainment of emotional and behavioral regulation and the capacity for positive relationships. It is only when these two important capacities are present and functioning well that the young child can truly be said to be "ready to learn".

Early in life, the baby relies on adults to provide the behavioral and emotional supports needed for physiological regulation to develop. Problems in regulation are shown in infancy through difficulties in sleep, feeding, and calming. Over time, young children gradually become more consistent in sleep and feeding schedules, showing the increasing skill in self-regulation that comes with maturity. For preschool children, problems in self-regulation are classically displayed as aggression. By the latter part of the second year of life, more sophisticated regulation skills, such as impulse control and frustration tolerance begin to emerge. Below are some of the skills through which young children demonstrate their growing capacity for self-regulation:

- Separates from familiar people
- Deals with fear and apprehension in acceptable ways
- Exhibits a positive attitude in approaching new challenges
- Attempts a variety of new gross/fine motor and sensory activities
- Tries difficult tasks
- Tries to solve own problems
- Expresses pleasure appropriately
- Expresses sadness appropriately
- Expresses anger appropriately
- Expresses disappointment appropriately
- Expresses discomfort appropriately
- Expresses appreciation appropriately
- Laughs appropriately
- Maintains appropriate intensity of emotions
- Expresses emotions appropriate for the context
- Indicates a need

Starting in infancy, supportive interactions with caring adults not only build a baby's ability to regulate his/her emotions but also help the baby learn how to have good relationships with others. Simple, everyday caregiving actions are needed to help babies attain both social and emotional competence. The parent who talks and plays with their baby in a sensitive way helps the baby's brain continue to grow and develop well into the second year of life. Teachers, early interventionists, and child care professionals who are sensitive and responsive to the child's experiences and needs also play a role in the development of social competence. Through responsive and nurturing caregiving, every adult can make a significant difference in the lives of babies and the adults they will become.

Below are some of the behaviors that demonstrate that young children are experiencing positive early relationships with adults and with peers:

- Responds attentively to familiar faces or voices
- Smiles for attention
- Recognizes when caregiver is not present
- Responds differently to strangers than a familiar family member
- Jointly attends to objects of interest to self
- Parallel plays with other children
- Recognizes others' feelings
- Helps and encourages others
- Gets along well with others

- Indicates a need
- Influences others' feelings and actions with positive behavior
- Demonstrates respect for the personal space of others
- Demonstrates respect for authority
- Accepts consequences of actions
- Works without disturbing others
- Expresses concern for others
- Helps and encourages others
- Helps an adult with a task
- Plays harmoniously with other children
- Interacts with a wide variety of individuals including other peers
- Shows preferences for particular peers or adults
- Follows directions
- Gets along well with others
- Imitates the actions of peers
- Expresses affection appropriately
- Desires to please another person
- Expresses concern for others
- Cares for other living things
- Introduces self
- Uses appropriate greetings
- Copies adult communication
- Demonstrates comfort in personal expression
- Engages in spontaneous conversation

In addition to social competence, "school readiness" starts in the cradle as early relationships have many consequences for later outcomes, both immediate and future. All aspects of social and emotional wellness are intertwined. A baby that has experienced positive relationships with caring adults is more alert, easier to calm, and sleeps and feeds well. Toddlers who have positive relationships are cooperative and can confidently explore and learn in many environments. As young children enter preschool and kindergarten, a foundation of positive relationships leads to better peer relationships, play skills, and ability to attend and benefit from classroom content. These benefits continue into later school years and even adulthood. Those who have experienced positive early relationships have advantages including better social, cognitive, and academic skills and avoiding risky behaviors, such as drug use, early pregnancy, and dropping out of school..

To complete the circle, adults who enjoyed early positive relationships as infants and young children are better prepared for parenthood. We now know that the seeds of positive early relationships start even before the baby is born. Astoundingly, the quality of the baby's relationship with his/her parents can be predicted from the parent's ways of thinking about relationships even before the baby is born. A parent who has experienced positive early relationships is more sensitive to their baby' needs and signals for help. As a result, the baby learns that interpersonal relationships are warm, loving, and satisfying. The baby feels secure knowing that her needs will be met and gains both a sense of effectiveness and a positive sense of self.

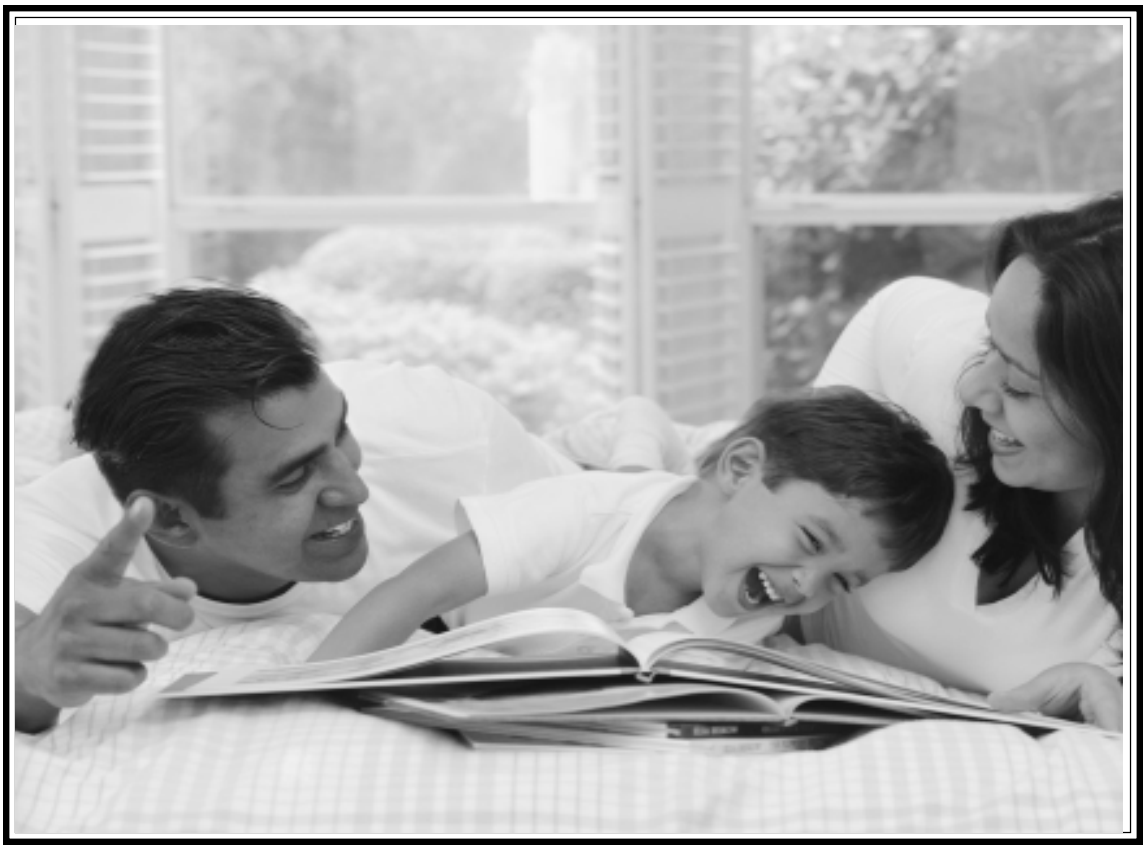
Success in core emotional skills of self-regulation and relationships leads children to develop positive feelings about themselves. Self-confidence, self-esteem, and a positive self- image are additional benefits of emotional well-being. Armed with this positive self-image gained children enter school prepared to succeed.

Below are some of the social and emotional competencies that help young children show their self-confidence and do well in their schools and communities:

- Follows schedules
- Practices self control in delaying gratification
- Completes task independently
- Shows enthusiasm for work and play
- Transitions from one activity to another
- Asks questions
- Accepts "no" comfortably
- Announces intentions

- Accepts compliments
- Identifies personal interests and hobbies
- Identifies personal achievements
- Identifies personal strengths
- Identifies personal weaknesses
- Shows enthusiasm for work and play
- Develops outlets for sharing personal interests and talents
- Attempts to develop new skills
- Varies from a model
- Incorporates fantasy into activities
- Uses a learned behavior in a new way
- Creates original products

As we read about the many developmental skills that young children need to be prepared for school, how these skills are demonstrated in everyday life, and especially how adults scaffold and support these skills, keep in mind the foundation for all of these wonderful accomplishments is positive early relationships. It has been said, "the first years last forever," so let's make these years the best they can be.



Adaptations for Exceptional Learners

We know that children learn at different rates and have varying abilities. Children bring different backgrounds and experiences into the learning environment, but when exceptional learners are in the early childhood environment, the range of differences in those learning rates and varying abilities increases. Exceptional learners are limited in their ability to progress without adaptations in their early childhood programs.

Who are Exceptional learners?

- Children with disabilities, developmental delays, or special needs.
- Children with specific intellectual, academic, or creative strengths.

What are Adaptations?

Adaptations are techniques and strategies designed to respond to a child's needs. Adults who recognize and appreciate the differences in children readily adapt instruction. Adapting instruction for exceptional learners is similar but more extensive and crucial for satisfactory progress to be made. Other terms for adaptations include modifications, accommodations, or differentiation.

Some children with mental or physical disabilities may need structured, teacher-assisted activities. Yet, children who are developmentally advanced need activities that encourage curiosity and independence. Rather than overprotecting or stifling exceptional learners, realize they are capable of taking an active part in activities and play. The role of the adult is to help the child learn acceptable ways to grow socially and academically.

The following teaching strategies and techniques are designed to help adults adapt activities or schedules for learners with varying needs.

- Sequence and Pace
- Child Preferences and Interests
- Special Equipment
- Peer Support
- Environmental Supports
- Materials
- Modify Activities
- Direct Adult Support
- Alternative Goals

Who Decides which Adaptations to Use?

Collaboration is very important when planning appropriate adaptations for children. Infants and toddlers with delays or disabilities, birth to age 3, may be enrolled in Indiana's First Steps Early Intervention

System (Part C). Within First Steps, child and family outcomes are stated in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Beginning at age three years, children with disabilities may be eligible for special education and related services through the public schools. This type of program has learning goals that are stated in the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Enrollment in an early childhood program may be part of the special education services designed specifically for the child with a disability. In meeting the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities, it is important that efforts be made to provide support to children and families where they live, learn and play, and where children without disabilities and their families participate. Likewise, preschool children with disabilities are to be educated with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To successfully meet the needs of exceptional learners, service providers and parents must plan the child's program together. Forming a collaborative relationship is essential for creating a successful learning environment. Such relationships require time for meetings, respect for others' educational philosophies, and support from the administration and personnel of programs serving young children and their families.

What are Some Effective Adaptation Strategies and Techniques?

Sequence and Pace

The adult may change the order in which activities occur, the amount of time allotted for the child to complete an activity, or the preparation for transition across activities.

- Create a predictable schedule.
- Provide additional time for children who need it to complete an activity or routine (e.g., getting dressed to go outside, eating snack).
- Provide alternate activities for a child finishing an activity (for example, snack) before others.
- Create a picture schedule to help children understand which activity or routine may occur next.
- Remind children before a transition and tell them which activity occurs next.

Child Preferences and Interests

The adult may use materials, toys, or a person for which a child has shown a special interest or preference to support active participation in activities or routines.

- Choose a topic or theme that is of special interest to the child (e.g., for a child who likes dinosaurs, have a few dinosaur books available during a book activity).

- Plan for a special or well-liked adult to lead an activity in which the child does not usually participate.

- Allow a child to select the activity in which he/she would like to participate, and introduce skills the child may need to learn during that activity (e.g., for a child who may be working on requesting, make sure the child uses the requesting skill in an art activity he/she has chosen).

- Adapt and create learning centers so that the concepts, ideas, and information are taught and reinforced in each of the multiple intelligences: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist.

- Provide opportunities for children to show their individual talents and interests.

Special Equipment

The adult may use adaptive devices or equipment for individual children.

- Use loop scissors or other adaptive scissors for a child who does not have the hand strength to cut with regular scissors.

- Use a bean bag chair or cube chair for a child in a wheelchair during circle time so that the child is on the same level as everyone else in the activity.

- Use adaptive spoons with built-up handles, nonskid surfaces under bowls or plates, and/or cups with cover tops or straws.

- Use a wagon in which two children (the non-walker, the slow walker or another child) can sit, with different children pulling the wagon each day for transitions involving walking long distances.

Peer Support

The adult may involve peers in encouraging children's active and appropriate participation in class activities.

- Use a variety of means to guide children in sharing and appreciating differences.

- Create an atmosphere enabling all children to get to know themselves and others.

- Support a child who is having difficulty by pairing the child with a peer who is successful in the task.

- Assign a buddy to help the child get in line or make transitions with the group.

- Praise appropriate behavior.

- Allow times for self-selection in groups based on interests, readiness level, and learning style.

Environmental Supports

The adult may adapt the flow of the room, activity areas, seating, and position options in ways that promote active participation.

- Arrange the classroom so that activity areas are clearly defined.
- Ensure that furniture is the appropriate size for children in the classroom.
- Place materials so that children can reach them independently.
- Make a quiet area available in the classroom (e.g., a place a child can go when feeling upset or overwhelmed and unable to handle behavior).
- Provide individual work spaces by using trays, box lids, placemats, etc., for children having difficulties keeping hands to self.
- Allow the child with a physical or mental disability an opportunity to use unfamiliar equipment in the classroom or playground ahead of time.
- Place pictures or symbols on shelves and containers to make cleaning up a matching game for children who have difficulty putting toys and equipment away.

Materials

The adult may modify materials and information so that the child can participate as independently as possible.

- Use picture cues, simplify language, or demonstrate instructions.
- Change or reduce the number of steps in a complex task.
- Provide a variety of materials at the sand table to allow for differences in ability to grasp and release.
- Lower the easel, give the child a chair, or buy/make a tabletop easel for the child who has difficulty standing.
- Tape wooden blocks to the pedals of a tricycle or big wheel for the child who has difficulty reaching the pedals.
- Wrap a piece of foam rubber (e.g., remove the foam rubber tubes on hair curlers) around the crayons or large pencils for the child who has difficulty grasping crayons.
- Use clamps or Velcro to attach the toy to a hard surface for the child who has difficulty using one hand.

- Glue a small piece of Styrofoam to each page making it simpler to turn pages.

- Use pictures and books that are bold and uncluttered for the child with visual impairment - high contrast colors in visual images are especially effective.

- Provide materials to promote higher level thinking such as sorting, classifying, sequencing, counting, and comparing and contrasting.

- Provide resources for activities that nurture and encourage gifted behaviors (e.g., puppets for performances).

Modify Activities

The adult may break a complex task into smaller parts, reduce the number of steps, adapt the skill level, or modify the rules of how the child approaches the activity. The adult may complicate a task by adding more parts or steps.

- Hand the pieces to the child one by one when the child is distracted by toys or puzzles with many pieces.

- Break activities such as cooking projects, craft projects, and table games into parts by describing or making pictures of the steps in clear terms: "First we do (x), then we do (y)."

- Respond to children's interests by preparing craft activities with individual children in mind.

- Increase gradually the steps the child does independently.

Direct Adult Support

Adults may provide assistance in an activity or routine to support the child's participation and learning. The amount of personal assistance provided will vary from child to child. Adults may model another way to play or expand on the child's play or behavior.

- Provide hand-over-hand assistance for some activities.

- Observe children during play to identify interests.

- Position an adult near the child who runs in the hall or play area.

- Give the child full eye contact and a smile to reinforce on-task behavior.

- Redirect a child who is on the verge of losing control by changing the pace, adjusting activity, or just giving a gentle touch before the child's behavior escalates.

- Provide a mentor for children with specific interests or talents.

Alternative Goals

Adults may adapt how the child can respond, including how much you expect the child to accomplish. Different goals and outcomes for children within the same learning activity can be identified.

- Allow children to respond to adults or activities in many different ways (e.g., present a block and a crayon to represent two different activities, and a child with cerebral palsy could indicate his choice using eye gaze or pointing).

- Embed gross motor skill practice in everyday routines.

Recommended Practices for Young Children Who Are English Language Learners (ELLs)

Young children come to us with varying experiences, backgrounds, and languages. Children whose home language is not English face the challenge of adapting to an early childhood setting that may not be consistent with their home culture and language. It is important for caregivers to assist young children in this transition through a respect for and acknowledgment of the language skills, knowledge, and culture that they bring with them to the early childhood setting.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states that caregivers can best meet the needs of children whose home language is not English by "preserving and respecting the diversity of the home language and culture that each child brings to the early learning setting" (NAEYC, 1995, p. 7). Most of the recommended practices for working with children who are English language learners are very similar to strategies encouraged in both early childhood education and special education and are simply techniques of good teaching.

It takes a long time to become fluent in any language, and children acquire English as a second language in different ways and at different rates. The difficulties in learning a second language should not be confused with a learning disability. Some children go through a "silent period," for up to as long as six months, in which they do not speak, but are learning to understand English. Other children quickly attempt to communicate in English and may mix or combine English with their home language (for example, "Quiero juice."). Some children may already be using simple phrases and appear fairly fluent. It is important to know that, even though a child is able to easily communicate with friends, research shows that it may take four or more years to become fluent in the cognitive language skills that are needed for academic learning (Cummins, 1981; Collier, 1989).

The following levels of English proficiency may help in setting appropriate expectations for individual children who are acquiring English as a second language. These levels should be used as a guide in understanding the language acquisition process.

Level 1: *Pre-production:* This is often referred to as the "silent period." Children are learning to understand the language and may not speak at all.

Level 2: *Early Production:* Children use single words or simple phrases to answer questions.

Level 3: *Speech Emergence:* Children start to use simple sentences and correct grammar to verbalize information.

Level 4: *Intermediate Fluency:* Children start to use more complex speech production and appear to be fluent. However, they may not have the vocabulary and grammar necessary to adequately express the concepts being learned.

Level 5: *Fluent English Proficient:* Children are on par with their native English-speaking peers.

While young children are in the process of learning English, it is important for adults to encourage the development of the child's home (native) language. Families transmit values, beliefs, and a sense of belonging to their children through their home language. Children also learn basic concepts necessary for later learning through everyday conversation and interactions when families continue to use the home language. Native language development will accelerate the acquisition of English. Encouraging families to speak to children in English at home, when family members may not be fluent English speakers themselves, can result in limited verbal interactions and modeling of incorrect language use. Families should be encouraged to speak and read to their children in the home language; children will learn English quickly from others in early childhood settings.

There are strategies that caregivers can use to help young children who are learning English feel comfortable in early childhood settings. Many of the following strategies are good techniques for use with all young children, particularly as they enter early childhood programs.

- Adults should speak clearly, use simple words, short phrases, and repetition and avoid the use of slang.

- Instead of correcting children's language, it is important to paraphrase and model correct use of English.

- Adults do not have to be bilingual to work with English language learners. However, it is helpful to learn a few words important to the child and his/her needs (such as words for food, for using the bathroom, and for family members).

- Caregivers can seek assistance and support from those with expertise in the language and the culture of the child, including family members, ESL providers, and others in the community.

- Adults who work with children learning English should use gestures, pictures, and real objects to help communicate with children.

- The many types of hands-on activities familiar to quality early childhood programs lend themselves to working with children who are not yet fluent in English. Children can express themselves through drawing, painting, using clay, and movement activities before they are able to use English to communicate.

- Caregivers should incorporate children's culture and language into activities whenever possible. Children will be more comfortable in an early childhood program if they can bring in pictures of their family, have favorite foods for snacks, use materials that are familiar to them in dramatic play, and hear their home language in the early childhood setting. Adults can play music in the child's language, have bilingual volunteers come in to read to the children in their home language, and ask families to tell stories in their home language on cassette tapes.

- Children should always be encouraged to speak with each other in their home language, as well as in English.

These techniques will make learning more meaningful and comprehensible to second language learners. Above all, it is important to be creative, open minded, sensitive, and familiar with the language acquisition process.

All children have different needs. As young children learn English, some will find it easier than others. Most teaching strategies that are encouraged in early childhood are already appropriate for young children learning a second language. It is not necessary to change the early childhood curriculum for children whose home language is not English, but it is important to support them in their efforts to communicate. Working closely with families, caregivers can create an environment for young children that respects their culture, encourages the development of their home language, and supports their English language learning.

Please contact the Division of Language Minority and Migrant Programs, Indiana Department of Education, at 800-382-9962 or 317-232-0555 for more information on working with English language learners.

Common Terms

ELL: English language learner: This term is used to identify a student who is learning English as a new or second language.

LEP: Limited English Proficient: This term identifies a student who is learning English as a new or second language.

ESL: English as a Second Language: This term is used to identify a course or type of service provided to ELL/LEP students.

ENL: English as a New Language: This term means the same thing as ESL.

FEP: Fluent English Proficient: This term identifies a student whose native language is other than English but is now fluent in English (level 5).

Bilingual Education: A program in which two languages are used in content area instruction.

Home language: The dominant language spoken in the home.

Native language: The first language of the student.

Dominant language: The language(s) in which the individual is most fluent.

Sheltered instruction: Teaching techniques and strategies that make the lesson more comprehensible for English language learners.

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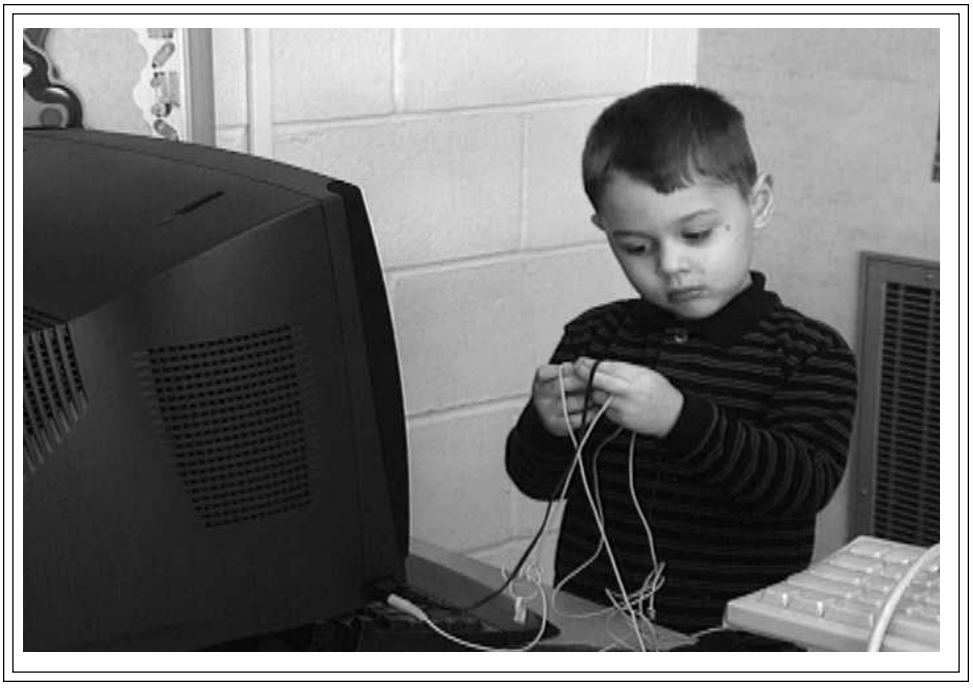
TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Access to and the use of information are important skills necessary for the future. To be successful in the future, young children will need to be knowledgeable, productive, independent, creative thinkers in a technology-based society. All adults working with children share the responsibility for providing programs that appropriately support each child's technological learning and development.

Appropriate technology tools are integrated into the environment and used to enhance learning for all children. For example, a child who cannot hold or manipulate a writing tool may be able to design drawings with elements in specific software programs.

The child's own interests and abilities should drive the decisions concerning the type of technology tools that are appropriate for the child. These tools should help children construct their own knowledge through open-ended, discovery-based activities. It is important to remember that the computer is only one of the many technology tools available. Young children can use cameras and scanners, measuring devices, and audio and video equipment to explore their worlds.

The following pages include a copy of *Media Guidelines for Parents* from the American Academy of Pediatrics (also available at www.aap.org) and two of the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) *Early Years are Learning Years* information sheets for adults who work with young children. Information on a variety of topics of interest to parents and educators is available on the NAEYC Website: www.naeyc.org.



Media Guidelines for Parents

Just as a print-literate child learns to be critical of the things he reads, he should also be able to do the same with moving pictures and sounds. Your child can learn to understand both the obvious and hidden messages in all media. Once children learn media education skills, they will begin to ask questions and think about the media messages they watch, read, and hear. And they usually will enjoy doing it.

Following are basic media education points your child should know:

People create media messages.
Any media message, whether it's a magazine article or a TV talk show, is created by a team of people. Those people write it, decide what pictures to use, and what to leave out. All of these things give the message a purpose. Each media form uses its own language. For example, newspapers make headlines large to attract readers to certain stories.

Media with sound may use music to make people feel a range of emotions.
When children learn about these techniques, they are able to understand how a message is delivered instead of only being affected by it. No two people experience the same media message in exactly the same way. How a person interprets a message depends on things unique to that person's life. These can include age, values, memories and education.

Media messages have their own values and points of view.
These are built into the message itself. Children should compare the promoted values against their own values. It is important for children to learn that they have a choice in whether to accept the values that are being promoted in any media message.

You can use these lessons as part of your everyday life. Besides asking how and why media messages are created, children of various ages can do everyday activities with you or other adults to help build media education skills. Make a game out of the following:

- Play "Spot the Commercials." Help your child learn to tell the difference between a regular program and the commercials that support it. This may be tricky during children's shows because many commercials advertise toys based on TV characters.
- Do a taste test to compare a heavily advertised brand with a generic or other nonadvertised brand. Try products such as cereals or soft drinks. See whether your child and his friends can tell the difference and whether advertising influenced their guesses.

- Look at the headlines, photos and placements of articles in a newspaper. How do these affect which stories your child wants to read? Read a few stories and compare their content with their headlines and photos.
- When you see a movie, video, or video game with your child, talk about whether what happens on screen would happen in the "real" world. For example, would a person really be able to drive a car super fast, down narrow streets, without crashing?
- While shopping, compare products with advertisements your child has seen. Look at the ingredients, label, or packaging. Is any of this information in the ad? Does the ad give any specific information about the product itself? How is the product different than it seemed from the ad or packaging?
- How many brands of beer, cigarettes, or other such products can your child name? If he can name even one, this is a great way to begin talking about the power of advertising. Discuss the health risks of using these products, and how the ads leave out that information.
- Watch a music video with your child. What stories are the pictures telling? Does the story on screen match the meaning of the words in the song? How does the video make your child feel? Can your child note any stereotypical, violent, or sexual images in the video? Is there any tobacco, alcohol, or drug use? Watch a music video with the sound off and see how it is different.

Starting when children are very young, most of their media use takes place in the home. This is a great opportunity for you to establish good viewing habits and to begin the process of media education. You can help your children make better use of media by doing the following:

- Make a media plan. Schedule media times and choices in advance, just as you would other activities. A media plan helps everyone to choose and use media carefully.
- Set media time limits. Limit children's total screen time. This includes time watching TV and videotapes, playing video and computer games, and surfing the Internet. One way to do this is to use a timer. When the timer goes off, your child's media time is up, no exceptions. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than one to two hours of quality TV and videos a day for older children and no screen time for children under the age of 2.
- Set family guidelines for media content. Help children and teens choose shows, videos, and video games that are appropriate for their ages and interests. Get into the habit of checking the content ratings and parental advisories for all media. Use these ratings to decide what media are suitable for your child.

- Be clear and consistent with children about media rules. If you do not approve of their media choice, explain why and help them choose something more appropriate.
- Keep TV sets, VCRs, video games, and computers out of children's bedrooms. Instead, put them where you can be involved and monitor children's use. If children or teens are allowed to have a TV set or other media in their bedrooms, know what media they are using and supervise their media choices. If you have Internet access, supervise your children while they are on-line.
- Make media a family activity. Whenever possible, use media with your children and discuss what they see, hear, and read. When you share your children's media experiences, you can help them analyze, question, and challenge the meaning of messages for themselves. During a media activity, help children "talk back," or question what they see. Do this during a violent act, an image or message that is misleading, or an advertisement for an unhealthy product.
- "Talking back," or asking questions about media messages, builds the lifelong skills your child needs to be a critical media consumer. Discuss how the media messages compare with the values you are teaching your child.
- Look for media "side effects." Unless they come clearly labeled as containing violence, sex, or graphic language, parents often overlook the messages children are getting from media. Instead, be aware of the media children and teens use and the impact it could be having. This is especially important if your child shows any of the following behaviors:

    - Poor school performance
    - Hitting or pushing other kids often
    - Aggressively talking back to adults
    - Frequent nightmares
    - Increased eating of unhealthy foods
    - Smoking, drinking, or drug use

Talk to your child's pediatrician about any behavior that is a concern. Your pediatrician may take a media history of your child. This can help uncover whether certain behavioral problems exist or could develop based on how much and what kind of media your child uses. If there are problems, or you think they could develop, work with your child to change his media use.

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early years are learning years

Technology and young children: What parents should know

It is not unusual to see a young child today slip a CD into a stereo system, set a digital alarm clock, or even program a VCR. Children quickly learn to use technology that is part of their daily lives, often with greater ease than their parents or other adults. But does their ability to do these complex tasks really enhance children's development? Does using technology really teach children new skills? What should parents know about the role of technology in children's learning?

According to NAEYC's *Young Children: Active Learners in a Technologi-cal Age,* computers can be active or passive agents for learning. Parents who recognize the difference will choose appropriate computer programs for their children.

As passive users, children utilize tools with no understanding of the concepts represented on the screen. The computer becomes an electronic worksheet that asks children to memorize without comprehending.

As active agents for learning, computers extend children's abilities, helping them to accomplish goals and objectives. In active use, children understand the relationship between real ideas and what is being represented on the screen. Constructing relationships between pictures and concrete objects helps children establish meaning.

In order to promote effective computer learning, parents should monitor the quality of the software children use, the amount of time children work with it, and the way in which they use it.

What should you teach your pre-school children about technology? Here are some suggestions:

❑ People control technology, and technology can be used for activities that are meaningful to people.

❑ Technology can take different forms, as in calculators, telephones, and tape recorders. It provides different, useful things in a variety of ways.

❑ Technology has rules that control how it works. Objects must have a source of power—they have plugs or batteries; computers must have instructions—either built-in or provided by the user.

❑ Computer programs require different ways of organizing thinking. Some will ask you to match and rhyme, others will give you the freedom to draw or paint whatever you wish.

Some parents express concerns about the role of technology in children's lives, such as how it will affect children's attention to social relationships and other activities. Appropriate computer programs promote dialog between children, as well as group problem-solving. They also offer opportunities for shared experiences between parents and children. As partners in our children's learning, we may not only monitor their educational environments, but we may experience their progress first-hand.

Checking out good software for children:

1 Software uses pictures and spoken instructions rather than written ones so that children will not need to ask for help.

2 Children control the level of difficulty, the pace, and direction of the program.

3 Software offers variety: children can explore a number of topics on different levels.

4 Children receive quick feedback so they stay interested.

5 Program utilizes the capacities of today's computers by appealing to children through interesting sights and sounds.

6 To determine a product's appropriateness for a child's current level of development, parents have evaluated the skill list and activities as described on the package, and previewed the product through store demonstration or a friend's computer.

7 Software engages children's interest by encouraging children to laugh and use their imagination in exploring.

8 The program allows children to experience success and feel empowered through learning.

Resources:

Wright, J. L. & D.D. Shade, *Young children: Active learners in a technological age*. NAEYC #341/$7.

The adventure begins: *Preschool and technology*. NAEYC video series. #827/$20.

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early years are learning years

Technology in early childhood programs

As technology becomes more accessible to early childhood programs and computer software becomes more user-friendly, early childhood educators have a responsibility to examine its impact on children and prepare themselves to use it for all children's benefit. Here are some tips for professionals in evaluating computer programs, which can be used—like any other learning tool—in developmentally appropriate or inappropriate ways.

1. Early childhood professionals must apply the principles of developmentally appropriate practice and appropriate curriculum and assessment when choosing technology for use in their classrooms or programs.

Even technological learning tools must be appropriate for the age and experience of children in a particular group. Software that is little more than an electronic worksheet does little to increase children's understanding of concepts.

2. Used appropriately, technology can improve children's thinking ability and help them develop good relationships with peers.

Developmentally appropriate software engages children in conversation and creative play. It also helps develop children's problem-solving abilities. Ideally, computer software should be designed to grow with children, offering more challenges as they learn new skills.

3. Technology should be integrated into daily learning activities.

Computers should not replace or disrupt existing program routines. This can be accomplished by locating computers in the classroom rather than in a separate lab. Teachers can choose software to further enrich the everyday curriculum and bridge the gaps between different subjects, like music and math.

4. Teachers should work for equity in access to technology for all children and their families.

Research has found that girls use computers in and out of school less often than boys do; African American students have less access to computers than White students; and richer schools buy more equipment and more expensive equipment (Sutton, 1991). If educators do not work to provide access to technology for all children, the gaps in children's ability and familiarity with technology will widen.

Technology has many potential benefits for children with special needs and may be essential for successful inclusion. Software may function as an "on-demand" tutor, meeting children's individual needs, learning styles, and preferences. And, when used appropriately, it may encourage and enable all children to think and work independently.

5. Technology has a powerful influence over children's learning—it must not teach them to stereotype or use violence to solve their problems.

Software can reflect children's diverse cultures, languages, and ethnic heritages; it should depict the world children live in and encourage them to appreciate diversity. Teachers and caregivers are challenged to discover software programs that promote positive social values and encourage tolerance and exploration of the richness in their own and other cultures.

Beware of violence and brutality in today's software, which often mirrors that of movies and TV. It is even more disturbing when destruction is used as a means of solving problems in computer software, because the software allows children to cause violence themselves, rather than just witness it on the screen. Software that allows children to destroy without facing actual consequences may hinder them from learning personal responsibility.

6. Work together with parents to promote appropriate uses of technology.

Early childhood professionals and parents both have a responsibility to educate themselves on the benefits of technology for children's education. Yet they must also make smart choices as consumers and inform software developers when they are unhappy or happy with products. Together, parents and professionals can advocate for software that encourages cooperation among children, caters to the needs of children with varying abilities, reflects productive and nonviolent ways of solving problems, and offers positive representations of gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, and physical abilities.

To receive a copy of NAEYC's position statement on Technology and Young Children, Ages 3 through 8, see the September, 1996 issue of Young Children, or send a SASE to NAEYC Public Affairs, Box #602, 1509 16th St., NW, Washington. DC 20036-1426.

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